

READY, SET, BONES

WITH BRISBANE'S **BUTCHER BIRDS** SET TO RELEASE THEIR DEBUT ALBUM, **LADIES OF DECEPTIVELY HEAVY ROCK STACEY COLEMAN AND JO NILSON** SPOKE TO **TAL WALLACE** ABOUT THE **BB MANIFESTO**.



One of the great pleasures of being in Brisbane for the past few years is having seen Butcher Birds go from unknown act to rising support to fully fledged power combo. Their first foray into recording, 2006's *Eat Their Young*, was a small but nourishing slice of what these three girls and one guy were capable of, but it's new offering *Set My Bones* that'll be making Australia sit up and pay attention. Not only is it a thick slab of heavy duty, fuzzed rock, it includes more hooks than a fisherman's tackle box. Don't say you haven't been warned.

Picture the scene: one of Brisbane's classier (read: expensive) drinking establishments; to my left, frontlady Stacey Coleman; to my right, basslady Jo Nilsson. Yes. They're girls, and they play loud guitar music. And it still seems to astound some people.

"A lot of the time you want people just to stop at the 'gee I love your music', without adding the 'you're great for a bunch of chicks'," explains Coleman.

"But the thing is," points out Nilson, "we are girls, and there's not much we can do about that! And the fact is there are not a lot of girls playing the sort of music that we play, and that's a shame, there should be more. We do pride ourselves on not wanting to be at a technical disadvantage when we're playing, in terms of knowing about equipment and stuff. I think we've always made a really big effort to discuss sound and listen when people are talking and be able to be on that level with other people. I think there are a lot of girls doing acoustic stuff but in terms of full on electric music, I love knowing about tech and being able to talk about it."

It's been a good decade since female-led loud bands had any real prominence in the public eye. Is it disheartening

to Butcher Birds to have that period of rock'n'roll be the mostly remarked upon when critics discuss their music?

"That's what I grew up with," says Nilson, "I was into Hole and Bikini Kill, and while I don't think that's a reference point for us necessarily anymore I think something like Riot Grrrr provided a lot of really good values."

"We don't have our influences on our sleeve when we write," offers Coleman, "it just comes out that way, I guess because of the heavy guitars and girls singing obviously it promotes that kind of comparison. And it's not like we just saw chicks doing it and they're our only influence. It's people just wanting to play music, it's not really a gender thing when it comes to our drive."

One of the standout features of *Set My Bones* is the lush production. The man at the tiller was Brisbane's own Jeff Lovejoy, but for the band, production starts right at the songwriting stage.

"We came into the studio with all of the songs sorted; we knew what we wanted out of them, we knew what sounds we wanted," says Nilson. "Jeff was great to work with, and we'd do it again in a second."

"When I write songs, I write with my voice in mind, and I'm a big harmoniser, so the studio outcome is what I imagine in my head, and the live outcome is just what I can do without all the layers," says Coleman.

"Yeah, it's like this album is what we hear in our brains when we're playing. There's nothing that we've put on there just for the hell of it, that's how we've always heard it," says Nilson.

Coleman explains the whole live version vs studio version succinctly; "I don't think there's anything wrong with elaborating in the studio and then perhaps not being able to pull it off exactly the same live, and I think there's raw quality to those songs when you play them live that's really endearing as well."

WHO: Butcher Birds

WHAT: *Set My Bones* (Meranoise/MGM)

WHERE & WHEN: The Zoo Saturday Oct 3

TIME OFF : ISSUE 1444-2